

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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## RESPONSE TO ELECTION OF SPECIES REQUIREMENT

Sir:

### **Response to Election of Species Requirement:**

In an Office Action mailed December 13, 2005, the Examiner identified the following allegedly patentably distinct species and requested that Applicants elect one of these species for prosecution in the above-captioned patent application.

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Associated Claims:</u>
Species I ( <b>Figs. 1 and 2</b> )	Claims 1, 2, 5-10, and 15-17
Species II ( <b>Fig. 3</b> )	Claims 1, 3, 5-8, 11, 12, and 15-17
Species III ( <b>Fig. 4</b> )	Claims 1, 4-8, and 13-17

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. The Examiner indicates that claims 1 and 8 are generic. Nevertheless, Applicants maintain that: claims 5-7 and 15-17, which depend directly from generic claims 1 and 8, respectively, also are generic. In response to the outstanding Office Action, Applicants hereby elect Species I, the species of Figs. 1 and 2 (Claims 1, 2, 5-10, and 15-17), without traverse, for prosecution on the merits and requests further consideration of this application in view of this election.

**Conclusion:**

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. Because Applicants maintain that claims generic to Species I-III are allowable, Applicants maintain that claims 1-17 now are allowable, and Applicants respectfully request allowance of these claims. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' representatives, either in person or by telephone, would expedite prosecution of this application, we would welcome such an opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,  
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